

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action of March 7, 2006, Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,676,684 ("Morley et al."); Claims 1-3 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,786,896 ("Madhani et al."); and Claims 43-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, 1st paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Claims 1-7, 12, 13, and 38-46 are pending, of which claims 4-7, 12, 13, and 38-42 are withdrawn pursuant to the restriction requirement. Claims 1-3 and 43-46 are directed to Species 1 in Figures 1-3.

Claim 1 has been amended for clarification to claim a plurality of actuation cables "which are actuatable to bend the flexible tube and the inner spring of the wrist member so as to allow pitch rotation and yaw rotation of the end effector" and neither Morley et al. nor Madhani et al. teach a flexible tube and inner spring which are to be bent so as to allow pitch and yaw rotations of the end effector.

On the other hand, in both Morley et al. and Madhani et al., pitch and yaw rotation of the wrist is performed by pulley/cable arrangements which cause rigid members to pivot about pivot connections or joints (see, e.g., FIGS. 9-13 of Morley et al. and FIG. 12 of Madhani et al). Thus, neither reference teaches that the bending of their rigid members allows the pitch and yaw rotation. The pitch and yaw rotations are fully provided by their pivot connections or joints, and do not require any bending of the rigid members.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is believed to be patentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over both Morley et al. and Madhani et al. for at least the foregoing reasons, as well as any other reasons previously argued.

Claims 2-3 and 43-46 are also believed to be patentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over both Morley et al. and Madhani et al. since they depend from Claim 1, and as such, are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as stated in reference to Claim 1, as well as any other reasons previously argued.

Because Claim 1 is generic and allowable, applicants respectfully request that dependent claims 4-7, 12, 13, and 38-42 be reinstated and allowed.

With respect to the rejection of Claims 43-46 under 35 U.S.C. 112, 1st paragraph, Claim 43 has also been amended for clarification to recite that the “inner spring is in the form of a wire wrap,” and such language is believed to be fully supported in the specification in paragraph [0066] of the published application, where it states “a wire wrap 34 is wrapped around the wires 24 similar to a coil spring and extends between the distal clevis 18 and the hypotubes 26.” Thus, it is believed to be clear from the specification that the “inner spring” recited in Claim 1 may be in the form of a “wire wrap” as recited in Claim 43.


As an aside, it is also believed that a person of ordinary skill in the art would understand, especially in light of FIG. 2, that the “inner spring” recited in Claim 1 may also be in the form of a conventional “coil spring”.

Claims 1-7, 12, 13, and 38-46 are pending, of which claims 4-7, 12, 13, and 38-42 are withdrawn pursuant to the restriction requirement. Claims 8-11 and 14-37 have been cancelled. Reconsideration of the rejected pending claims is respectfully requested for

the reasons herein stated, and an early notice of their allowance earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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